

Appl. No. 10/786,873
Amdt. dated July 5, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed April 5, 2005

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (Previously presented): A surgical balloon apparatus comprising:

 a tubular member having an open proximal end a distal end defining a bore therein;
 a handle attached to the proximal end of the tubular member;
 a balloon having an interior space and an elongate neck, wherein a portion of the elongate neck is secured to an interior portion of the handle thereby defining an annular space between the elongate tubular member and the neck, the annular space being in fluid communication with the interior space of the balloon;
 an opening located on the handle, the opening being substantially aligned with the bore for receiving a surgical instrument therethrough; and
 a port located on the handle, the port in fluid communication with the annular space.

Claim 3 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 2, wherein the balloon is formed of a non-elastomeric material.

Claim 4 (Currently amended): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 3, wherein ~~upon~~ during inflation of the balloon, the ~~balloon has a length of the balloon~~ along a longitudinal axis of the tubular member ~~that is less than a length along an axis that is transverse to the longitudinal axis of the tubular member~~ decreases.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 2, wherein the distal end of the tubular member is open.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 5, wherein the bore extends through the tubular member such that the open proximal end is in communication with the interior space of the balloon.

Claim 7 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 5, wherein the handle further includes a substantially fluid-tight seal.

Claim 8 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 2, wherein the handle further includes an O-ring for capturing at least a portion of the neck for attaching the balloon to the handle.

Claim 9 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 2, wherein the port and the annular space define a fluid path for introducing an inflation medium into the interior space.

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 2, further comprising a clamp mechanism having a first ring and a second ring, each ring having a hole disposed therein, the second ring including a slot configured and dimensioned for receiving the first ring wherein the holes are dimensioned to accommodate a portion of the neck and the tubular member.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 10, wherein the clamp mechanism has a first state and a second state such that the clamp mechanism in the first state is capable of being moved along the tubular member and in the second state is in a fixed position along the tubular member.

Claim 12 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 11, wherein the first ring includes a biasing mechanism, the biasing mechanism biasing the first ring away from the second ring.

Claim 13 (Previously presented): The surgical balloon apparatus of claim 12, wherein the biasing mechanism includes at least one spring disposed on the first ring.

Claim 14 (Previously presented): The surgical apparatus of claim 12, wherein the clamp mechanism is in the second state when the biasing mechanism biases the first ring away from the second ring.

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Claim 15 (Previously presented): The surgical apparatus of claim 12, wherein a force is applied to the biasing mechanism to overcome the bias thereby causing the clamp mechanism to be in the first state.